

THE
LAST ADVICE

BUT
ONE.

PRICE SIXPENCE.

Entered at Stationers-hall.

THE
LAST
ADVISE

THE CONST

O-M-E

PRINCE OF WALES

Entered at Stationers-Hall.

THE
LAST ADVICE

BUT
ONE,
OF A
LOVER OF THE BRITISH CONSTITUTION,
TO
All Lovers of the said Constitution,
RESPECTING THE
NEW SEDITION
AND
TREASON BILLS.

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1795.

THE

LAST ADVISE

ON DAIR

OF THE NEW

NEW SUBSTITUTION

THE ASSOCIATION

OF THE

OF THE NEW SUBSTITUTION

THE
LAST ADVICE
BUT ONE.

MEN never go wrong for want of advisers, but they very often do for want of taking advice, and this is altogether owing to the perverseness of philosophers, who persist in giving advice which they know will not be taken. Seeing this, I have duly considered the tempers of those whom I address, and have so prudently wrought up my counsels, for their present occasion, that I persuade myself they will abandon all others for mine.

One Plautus, who was a writer either among the Greeks or the Romans, was waggish enough to say, *that every man's fortune was what he himself made it.* If this were the case, we should not need to be told what we have to do in our present extremity. But this Plautus was a heathen and a poet ; and heathens were an unenlightened race of men in all times, and poets have always dealt in fiction. Whatever they, or others, may say, we know that we cannot order the affairs of the world at our pleasure ; nor, indeed, of so small a part of it as this island is ; wherefore, we must be content to do the best we can for ourselves, either individually or in bodies, while things ~~ran~~ in the track which happens to be described by the powers that govern us and them.

u / But, I think I ought, without farther delay, to begin my discourse, and to begin it with a simple statement of the case which I mean to talk

talk about and decide upon. This, then, is the case. There are two or more bills, known by the names of the new sedition and treason bills, in parliament (for I do not know how many there are, and therefore must be excused the want of precision in this article,) running in a moral parallel from the same point to the same goal, although in their local direction running counter and jostling each other in a very whimsical way: which bills, in some degree or other, affect and injure our venerable and excellent constitution.

I do not in my conscience think that to shew what a good constitution is will be the right way for us to take in this affair, for an old proverb says, *where there are many people there are many minds*; now many minds produce quarrels, which we must shun; and quarrels waste time, which we have not to spare. We are agreed that, whatever be the limbs, body, and soul, of a good constitution, we have one at present;

and that is enough, on this part of the subject, for my purpose.

But I do think that I shall not make our way at all plain, if I do not make out my statement of the case, that is to say—*that the bills above mentioned do, in some degree or other, affect and injure our present constitution*; and therefore I beg leave to give a short history of some facts about this constitution, which are as follows;

A set of swaggering, overbearing, selfish princes, who are as well known by their hated principles as by their scouted family name, I mean the wretched name of Stuart, had a kind of hereditary itch in their blood, which gave them no rest, night nor day, but when they were planning the means of governing the people of this country by the measure of their evil dispositions instead of the acknowledged measure of the laws. The people

people would not be so governed ; and in a fit of courage, in the first instance, put to death the second king of England of that family, and in a subsequent affair kicked the fourth king of England of the same family out of the land. Well, then, they had rid themselves of tyrants. But they thought it wise to shut the door against future tyrants ; and the last affair, I mean that of kicking the last of the Stuarts out of the land, gave them the power of doing so. They called in a prince from Holland, named William Prince of Orange ; for they were unanimously of opinion they could not govern themselves, and we, you know, are of the same opinion as to ourselves. They made secure terms, however, with William ; and hence came the constitution we are now talking about. It is not to the purpose, to enquire how far this William was grateful. I say grateful : for, though the task of governing a nation be a great task, the profit of it is great also ; and
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when a man is employed and paid well for his work, we call one part of the obligation he has to us by the name of gratitude, because we might have employed any other man among ten thousand to do the same, and the preference we give our man demands, we think, a little gratitude in return. But, at this time, it is no matter how William behaved himself. He died. The people of this country were then governed by a woman, named Queen Anne, who was the daughter of the banished Stuart. She died: and then came in, to govern us, a family that was very illustrious, wealthy, and powerful, in Germany.

Now we come to the point of this history that immediately belongs to this very affair we are talking about. When the German family came in, to govern us, they agreed, on their part, to certain conditions, in like manner as William had done,
and

and to the like effect, which conditions, together with certain submissions of the people of this country, make up the whole of our present constitution. We will not enquire here into the gratitude of this illustrious house any more than we did into that of William ; because the gratitude of any house is not to the purpose at all, we having other matters to settle. The questions we have to do with are : 1st. What were the conditions agreed to by the illustrious house of Hanover ? And 2d. Are these, or any of them, violated by these new sedition and treason bills ? When the above questions are answered, my statement of our case stands or falls ; and if it stand, I have only to perform my promise of adding my advice on the case.

And first, of the terms of the agreement between the people and the illustrious house of Hanover,

Promises

Promises were made on both sides. To begin with the people ; for though they certainly are the least worthy, they unfortunately are the more powerful and more effectual party—the people conditionally promised to obey the said illustrious house *for ever*. And this was but fair and reasonable ; because no house would or could come from Germany, or elsewhere, to do a nation a service, and leave itself subject to be sent back again on the first change of the popular breath, which might take place even before the wind that brought the house over could change to take it back to its native land.

The people also, at the same period, granted certain revenues to the said illustrious house for its better maintenance and support ; and have been adding to and swelling the said revenues, from time to time, ever since, according to the advance from time to time taking place in the necessaries and comforts
of

of life. And this also was but fair and reasonable, for no house could be found to run, like Don Quixotte, in search of adventures by which nothing but broken pates and disrepute was to be gotten and enjoyed.

These are all the essential parts of the people's promises ; for, if they pay and obey, nothing more ought to be, or can be expected from them, by any liberal or candid persons who may treat with them ; and, therefore, we turn to the promises on the side of the illustrious house of Hanover.

And first, it promised to marry none but protestants, and to maintain the protestant religion in these lands. And no complaint is, or can be made on this score, for the present head of that illustrious house is a protestant, and married to a protestant ; and the heir apparent of the illustrious house is the same, and has done the same, having, for better security

in this point, married a lady of his own illustrious house.

Secondly, the said illustrious house promised to maintain the rights and liberties of the people. And this was honourable on their part ; for the people called in the said illustrious house to the express end, and for the express purpose, of maintaining their liberties against the aforesaid intruding house of Stuart, as their ancestors had formerly called in the Saxons against the Picts, although certainly in this latter case the thing was done with more cunning and foresight than was exercised in the former,

But rights and liberties to be maintained must be defined ; and they were so in the present instance, on a certain roll of paper or parchment, called the *Bill of Rights*.

Now

Now all that is to be found in this bill of rights is reducible to two main points.

First, the said illustrious house agreed to govern the people by certain known and defined principles, which species of government was the thing contended for by the people, against the faithless and fallen house of Stuart.

And, secondly, the said illustrious house acknowledged in the people the right, privilege, and power of examining, at all times, and in any peaceable manner, how far the said illustrious house pursued, or departed from the principles they were called in to maintain for the benefit of the said people; and, in case of any departure, by the said illustrious house, from the said principles, humbly to petition the said illustrious house to return thereto.

Now all these concessions were perfectly reasonable; for why should a nation kick a

house out of its borders because it would not govern according to the fancy of the nation, and fail to bargain with the new house for such government as it liked? or how should it know how the new house governed, if it did not examine? or bring the new house to a sense of its trust, in the case of such sense being lost by the said house, if it did not petition?

After all, it must be granted that great liberality is to be used in judging of the fact of a government's being consistent with certain principles or otherwise, because of the different force and effect of terms upon different minds. Therefore, no squares are broken by little deviations of the house of Hanover from the British Constitution, either as they tend to the right or left, are for or against the people, if any such deviations do in truth exist, or have in truth existed at any time since the accession of that illustrious house.

house. The house is a generous house, and let it be generously treated.

But it is a thing to be determined with precision, whether the people are or are not left free to discuss the measures of government in the first instance, and afterward, if there be occasion, to offer their humble petitions to the government respecting them.

Now we come to issue with the bills. The bills take away this right, liberty, and privilege. We will not be blinded by lawyers, whose occupation it is to confound, nor be dazzled by men of rank and splendid appearance, who are themselves deceived by their habits and wishes. The bills are written in the English language. By virtue of those bills, if we discuss in writing, or by conversation, the merits of any measure of government, (unless we argue all on one side, which is not discussion) we are liable, for the first time

time of doing so, (I cannot say for the first offence, for I cannot perjure my immortal soul by such a prostitution of words) to be fined, imprisoned, and pilloried ; and for the second time, to be transported. If this were all, this would effectually destroy all liberty of discussion ; for who will enter into discussion with such a scourge over his head ? None, but he who holds a rod more biting and powerful than the scourge. But these pains and penalties are not all. There are more, if to lose life be a penalty more bitter than these. We may be hanged for discussion. There will always be lawyers, *there are such now*, to shew that we meant by discussion to destroy his Majesty's person and government ; and a jury may be found, in worse times than these, to accede to the exposition.

But if liberty of discussion be gone, of what use is the liberty of petitioning ? unless the mode, hereafter, is to be, unanimously to petition

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tition against what we have never previously discussed. Here again, we will not argue with lawyers and statesmen about the power and privilege of drawing up petitions, with an army planted round the place of our meeting, although it be headed by men of such unblemished stations as that of magistrate. To be quibbled out of our rights is worse than to be beaten out of them. We thank God, we can yet read, digest, and understand what is written in our native tongue. The bills cannot take our faculties from us by a blow. Although it may put our children, and our children's children, into a train of dwindling down, by degrees, into animals as incapable of reading, digesting, and understanding words, as the cream-coloured horses of his majesty's mews, or any other coloured horses of any other mews, can be.

What then are we to do? Now we come to the remedy. And happy it is, that it should

should at once be plain, easy, and agreeable to
 our wishes. The illustrious house of Hanover,
 among other things it granted us on its first
 coming to rule us, granted the right of re-
 sisting oppression, in the case of its ever for-
 getting itself. But, thanks to the illustrious
 house, we have not reached that extremity !
 The bills are temporary bills ! The pains and
 penalties, temporary pains and penalties ! At
 a period which all good men will pray God
 to avert, we shall step again into our liber-
 ties as easily and as pleasantly as we now step
 out of them. Ah, my friends and country-
 men, how does fortune watch over this happy
 island, since, during a struggle of many hun-
 dreds of years for our liberties, she not only
 preserved but improved them, spite of all
 monstrous and faithless houses, since she esta-
 blished them for ever by the accession of the
 illustrious house of Hanover, and since she
 provides, even now, when hard necessity will
 wrench them from our hands, that they shall
 here-

hereafter be restored, not merely secure, but, according to the course of things, saved from the depredations of a lapse of time, during which otherwise they would have been in so much use and wear.

The bills are temporary ! Let those who would insinuate that they are like the destroying angel be put to the blush ! The bills are not for the destruction of our liberties, but for their better preservation. Mr. Dundas, indeed, desired to be informed if the bill of rights might not be altered. Mr. Dundas was either in his cups, or he is a wicked man; for, if the bill of rights be impeached, the pretensions of the faithless, fallen, scouted house of Stuart are revived, for the supporting of which pretensions so many of Mr. Dundas's countrymen have (to use a strong expression) *bitten the dust*. But this was the language of Mr. Dundas, not of the bills. The bills do not alter, do not destroy the bill of

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rights ;

rights; they only suspend its operations, And the suspension is temporary. Wherefore my advice is—*that you submit*. And I will give you my reasons for the advice.

And, in the first place, if you do not submit, you must join, in spite of your teeth must join, the London Corresponding Society, and the cursed Jacobins, in resistance. God defend us from such a scandalous scene! The Constitutionalists, Alarmists, Quietists, and Jacobins in arms, and in the same ranks together! For my part, if there be still two ways of ruin open to me, at least I pray to have this last consolation in human misery left me, that of taking my own, and going with the company I like best.

In the second place, if you do not submit, you put all that is substantial in your happy state into danger, to avoid a merely temporary evil; and that is childish and absurd.

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The bills are in force only during his majesty's natural life ; and, although we know (by sad experience, one might say, by a figure of speech) that he is infallible, we know also, he is not immortal. When, therefore, he shall be ripe for glory, and unhappily the time must come when he shall be so, you will be free. He will enter into eternal life, and you into your liberties, together. Fortunate sovereign, and fortunate people, the completion of whose bliss is reciprocal and simultaneous !—You see, it is your interest, as the framers of the bills wisely provided it should be, to consider the thing in this light. The question is not of or about the soil and the freehold ; but about outhouses, and pent-houses, and other houses, about vile things corruptible, perishable, and transient in their nature. For God's sake, if we fight, do not let us fight for straws!

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In the third, and to cut the matter short, the last place, consider if you submit patiently, this slight absence from felicity will but enhance its price on your return to it. And, let me tell you, the time of absence is not without its pleasures. When any of you are separated from a beloved mistress, you dwell on her perfections, you run over her individual beauties, beginning where fancy first leads you, and taking them one by one. If you have a friend who knows her, you talk of her to him, to tell him of charms as familiar to him as to yourself, as though he nothing knew. Good God ! There is a melancholy pleasure in this pain, perhaps beyond the whole of the reality ! Enjoy it in this case. And, for the other, and weightier reasons I have given you, submit to this separation ; so shall you hereafter return on the wings of love and passion to the enjoyment of your rights.

Nov. 22, 1795.



